Study Sketch by Irvin Shope

Charlie Russell of the Old Days—
By Federal Student Irvin Shope

Sketch of Charles Russell's Famous Log Studio, by Federal Student Charles A. Bell

every man who worked with them. I found very soon that we had much in common. Mr. Russell had heard about my work in art through other guides and through "dudes," and he at once offered me a helping hand. He invited me to see his work in his studio, and he also told me to look him up in his winter quarters at Great Falls, which I did after the tourist season closed.

He encouraged me to spend much of my time with him, and he took a great interest in my work. I opened a little studio, and Mr. Russell came to see me as often as his time permitted him. He criticized my work, and he had a habit of doing it in a timid-like manner that everyone would welcome. He could always see the humorous side of everything, but at the same time he would be giving you helpful hints.

We all know that Mr. Russell has been a cowboy ever since he was a lad and that he has made a lifetime study of range life. But to my surprise, he was always ready to listen to the story of anybody else about the different styles of working in the cow game.

Whatever you told him he would accept in a sincere and grateful manner. He hardly ever forgot anything he heard. I think he had the best memory of anyone I have ever known.

Now, I spent a big part of my life in the Southwest, down in the Nevada and California country where they still use the old Spanish style of working cattle. He always enjoyed talking about the range ways of that country and anything I told him he never forgot. In his latter work, in which he was leaning strongly toward Southern scenes, I noticed he applied some of the costumes of which I had told him, every now and then.

Mr. Russell always gave a ready interest in any work he saw and no matter how poor it was he would always find some good points about it and encourage the person to go on with it.

In rival work he would never show a bit of jealousy, but would ever admire the work of the successful artist. I always claimed that this was one of the important points that helped Mr. Russell to fame.

They often talk about different Western scene painters being a second C. M. Russell, but my honest opinion is that there was only one C. M. Russell. There still lingers but one C. M. Russell way down deep in our heart's memory, and there never will be another. He has no equal. Though he now rides the Great Range of the Shadowland beyond, the stirrup of his saddle, on the horse of artistic fame, is too high for any one here to reach.

It is remarkable how things work out. Mr. Russell had told me how he was going to put together a model of a six-horse stage coach, taking pains to point out how he would place this horse and that one to make right action and expression in the completed model. Mrs. Russell has given me permission to go on with this work and I am now working in his studio finishing several models the Master started.

Impressions of the Cowboy Artist
By Federal Student
Irvin (Shorty) Shope

I did not know just what to expect on my first visit to Charlie Russell. I was dressed roughly and had a day's growth of whiskers on my chin. I'll admit I was a bit nervous when I entered his studio to introduce myself. I was surprised to find him dressed in much the same way as I was: a wide grey felt hat, a flannel shirt open at the neck, straight pants worn with a sash instead of a belt and cowboy boots made his costume.

I grinned, which is my most common fault. "Where're you from?" asked this plain looking cowboy person, and tho his face did not express anything his voice was warm.

That was our introduction and right away it seemed as tho I had known him always. I told him where I lived and what I did and we fell into an easy conversation over some of my drawings which I had with me. It was hard for me to realize that I was sitting talking to "The Cowboy Artist" as tho we were old

Charles Russell's Saddle Horse, Sketched by Federal Student Charles A. Bell

Over the Great Divide. Tribute of Walter J. Wilmerding to His Friend and Fellow Artist, Charles M. Russell

friends. It tickled me pink when I started to roll a cigarette from "Bull" Durham that he also proceeded to make himself one from the same tobacco.

We drifted to talk of countries where he and I both had ridden and he smiled when I'd mention some familiar spot in old Montana which brought to his memory incidents of the days when he himself rode as a cowboy. He questioned me as to my prowess as a "puncher" and spoke a mere word, "good," when I recited, as a small boy would to a teacher, my first-hand knowledge of horses, roping and the handling of cattle.

"Stay in the West, boy," he said as I asked him what he would do if he were in my place. "The men, the horses and the country you like and want to study are here, not back East. There are home study schools for boys like you. There's one in Minneapolis."

"The Federal School?" I asked and added, "I'm with them now."

"Yes, that's a good school," he continued, "study with them. Sometime I hope you can go to California. There's places down there where a fellow could get a job, ridin' the year around. There's punchers down there who act, dress and ride just like they used to forty years ago, long backed lean fellows who ride as if they were part of their ponies. They sure look good," and his eyes took on a dreamy look as if those supple riders were trooping by out of the past he knew. Again he repeated, "Shorty, they sure look good."

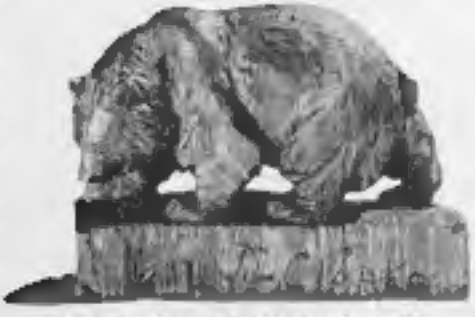
And now Russell has gone, over the Last Great Divide to the last round-up, but his paintings, vivid with gold and violet sunsets, teeming with the action of cowboy, Indian, trapper, and all those other fast-fading, picturesque characters who lived the history of the Old West, he has left with us, painted as he alone, who knew, could paint them.

The thrilling, colorful drama of life in our Last Frontier, told as no written account could possibly tell it, he has left, that future generations may not forget the men who entered the raw West and by their rough lives made it possible for civilization to advance.

"So Understanding," Says Wife of the Indian Sculptor, John L. Clarke

Mr. Russell came to visit my husband every summer except last (he was unable to, his health so poorly). His visits were of greatest possible moments to John. Altho at first greeting John invariably told Mr. Russell (Indian sign language—of which he too was very good), "Let us exchange heads, yours is fine." Then he (Mr. Russell) would laugh and tell John, "Yours too is good." Mr. Russell would then look at all of my husband's work, sculpture and landscape (oil) and praise it, encouraging just enough and not too much. He was so understanding, deeply sympathetic and in all wholly lovable.

—Mrs. John L. Clarke.



Wood Carving of Grizzly by the Indian Sculptor, John L. Clarke

FIRST PRIZE—*Animal Drawing* IRVIN SHOPE, *Missoula, Mont.*

Story of "The Picture That Failed"

The Bandit—Painted by Frank Shope

COWBOY artists may come down hard from a fall but they always make the experience count. Listen to the story from Shorty Shope of a painting that failed. Writing to Mr. Wilwerding, he says:

"I think your kicking does me good too. One day after I got one of your most energetic letters I got sore at a picture I was painting because I would keep toning and greying it and I just took pure vermilion and yellow and cobalt blue and smeared all over it.

"Then I that I'd spoilt it so I chucked it into my closet. Last Sunday I happened to notice it so I took it out and looked it over. It didn't seem so bad only a little wild as to detail. So I mixed up some more paint and painted away till it almost looks like a picture. I'm sending it with another of its size for the Exhibit.

"The one I spoiled I call 'The Bandit.' He's looking back, as he breaths his horse on the top of the pass, grinning at his pursuers—for who could follow him into the maze of broken crags through the purple mist which hangs in the valley.

"Now don't expect too much. There is still a lot of dark blue and brown in this picture and you may not like it at all. But you will unconsciously grin with my bandit."

Mr. Shope asks that this picture be returned as it has already been sold, the purchaser kindly loaning for a place in the Exhibit, where it will undoubtedly attract much attention. In closing he adds:

"When I get a ranch like Will James, away out from the haunts of men—and that is one of my chief ambitions—I will have you out for as long as you care to stay and will have you a nice easy gaited saddle horse to ride as long as you like. And it won't be very long now if I keep on working as hard as I have this summer."

Prize Winning Drawing by Ida Brown, of Floral, Indiana

Story illustration by Irvin Shope, Missoula, Montana

Irvin Shope's spare time last summer was devoted to mural decorations for the forestry building at the University of Montana. His illustrations for "Rusty Rawlins," cowboy feature by Glen Chaffin, won him recognition for cleverness of treatment of Western life.

Irvin Shope, cowboy artist

"Shorty" Shope